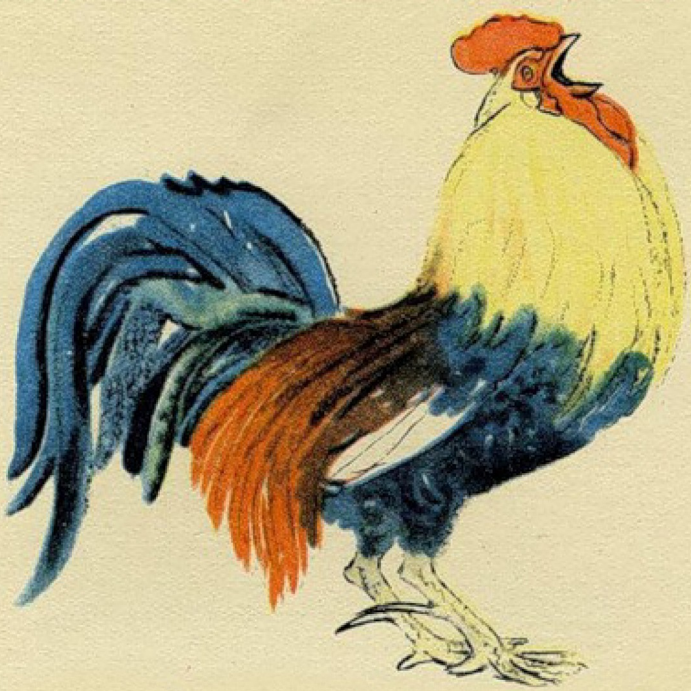
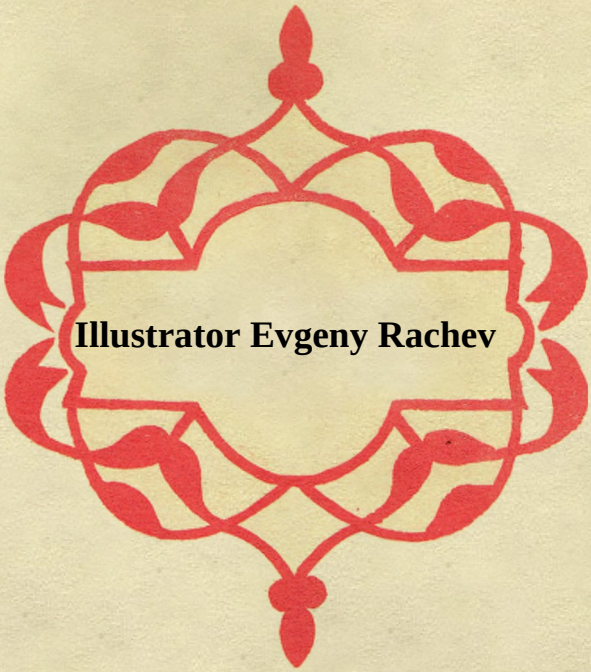
The Golden Cockerel

ДЕТГИЗ
1954



The Golden Cockerel

Russian fairy tale



Illustrator Evgeny Rachev

Once upon a time, there lived a cat, a thrush, and a cockerel with a golden comb. They lived together in a little house in the forest. The cat and the thrush would go into the forest to chop wood, leaving the cockerel alone at home.

Before leaving, they would always give him strict instructions:
"We’re going far away, and you must stay home and keep watch. Don’t make a sound, and if the fox comes, don’t look out the window."

The fox found out that the cat and the thrush were away, so she ran to the little house, sat under the window, and sang:
"Cockerel, cockerel,
Golden comb,
Buttery head,
Silken beard,
Look out the window,
I'll give you some peas."

The cockerel stuck his head out the window, and the fox grabbed him with her claws and carried him off to her den.

The cockerel cried out:
"The fox is carrying me
Through the dark forests,
Across the swift rivers,
Over the high mountains...
Cat and thrush, save me!"

The cat and the thrush heard him, gave chase, and rescued the cockerel from the fox.

Another time, the cat and the thrush went to the forest to chop wood and again warned the cockerel:

"Now, cockerel, don’t look out the window. We’re going even farther this time, and we won’t hear your voice."

They left, and the fox came back to the house and sang:
"Cockerel, cockerel,
Golden comb,
Buttery head,
Silken beard,
Look out the window,
I’ll give you some peas."

The cockerel stayed quiet. But the fox sang again:
"Children were running,
Scattering wheat,
The hens are pecking,
But the cockerels get nothing..."

The cockerel stuck his head out the window:
"Cock-a-doodle-doo! How can they get nothing?!"

The fox grabbed him with her claws and carried him off to her den.

The cockerel cried out:
"The fox is carrying me
Through the dark forests,
Across the swift rivers,
Over the high mountains...
Cat and thrush, save me!"

The cat and the thrush heard him, gave chase. The cat ran, the thrush flew... They caught up with the fox—the cat scratched her, the thrush pecked her, and they rescued the cockerel again.

Some time later, the cat and the thrush once again went to the forest to chop wood. Before leaving, they sternly warned the cockerel:
"Don’t listen to the fox, don’t look out the window. We’re going even farther this time, and we won’t hear your voice."

They went deep into the forest to chop wood. And the fox was right there again: she sat under the window and sang:
"Cockerel, cockerel,
Golden comb,

Buttery head,
Silken beard,
Look out the window,
I’ll give you some peas."

The cockerel stayed quiet. But the fox sang again:
"Children were running,
Scattering wheat,
The hens are pecking,
But the cockerels get nothing..."

The cockerel still stayed quiet. But the fox sang once more:
"People were running,
Scattering nuts,
The hens are pecking,
But the cockerels get nothing..."

The cockerel stuck his head out the window:
"Cock-a-doodle-doo! How can they get nothing?!"

The fox grabbed him tightly with her claws and carried him off to her den, through the dark forests, across the swift rivers, over the high mountains...

No matter how much the cockerel cried and called, the cat and the thrush didn’t hear him. And when they returned home, the cockerel was gone.

The cat and the thrush followed the fox’s tracks. The cat ran, the thrush flew... They reached the fox’s den. The cat brought out a little harp and began to play:
"Plink, plank, little harp,
Golden strings...
Is Lady Fox at home,
In her cozy little nest?"

The fox listened and thought:
"Let me see who plays the harp so sweetly and sings so beautifully."
She crawled out of her den, and the cat and the thrush grabbed her—they beat and thrashed her until she ran away with her tail between her legs.

They took the cockerel, placed him in a basket, and brought him home.
And from then on, they lived happily, and they still live to this day.

Evgeny Mikhailovich Rachev was a Soviet animal artist known for his work in book graphics.

He was born in Tomsk. He lost his father early in life. His mother was a doctor, and his stepfather was a civil engineer.

He spent his childhood in the Siberian village of Yudino, near Tomsk. When Evgeny was twelve years old, the October Revolution took place in the country and the Civil War began. In 1920, escaping starvation, he was forced to travel alone from Siberia to Novorossiysk to be with his mother. During that difficult time of famine, he studied at a nautical school, worked at the port as a stevedore and winch driver, and then transferred to a locomotive technical school. But he was increasingly drawn to art: he wrote poetry and drew.

In 1928, he graduated with honors from the Kuban Art and Pedagogical College in Krasnodar. He then studied briefly at the Kiev Art Institute. In 1930, he began collaborating with various children's publishers as an illustrator. He specialized in Russian folk tales, Russian prose, and fables.

In 1936, Rachev's drawings were seen in Detgiz and invited to Moscow. The young artist moved to the capital and began working actively, but soon the Great Patriotic War began, and he went to the front. After the war, Evgeny Mikhailovich continued to work at Detgiz, and he also collaborated with many other publishing houses. In 1960, he became the chief artist at the Malysh publishing house, a position he held for about twenty years.

Rachev dedicated his entire creative life, over sixty years, to working with books, creating hundreds of beautiful illustrations. At the same time, the artist always kept his young audience in mind and strived to ensure his drawings were accessible to children.

Evgeny Mikhailovich worked on a significant portion of his books together with his wife, Lidiya Ivanovna Racheva (1923–2011), who often collected material for his future books, made sketches of ornaments and folk costumes in museums, translated and retold fairy tales of different peoples, compiled collections of fairy tales, and even calculated book layouts to ensure that the text and future illustrations would precisely match.

Evgeny Mikhailovich Rachev lived a long life, which included many events – both personal and those experienced by his contemporaries.

He was buried at the Kalitnikovskoye Cemetery in Moscow in 1997, and the artists with whom he worked at the Malysh publishing house came to see him off.

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